ASSESSMENT POLICY FOR VIRGINIA ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS

REVISED: DECEMBER 31, 2013

EFFECTIVE DATE: JULY 1, 2014

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF
TECHNOLOGY, CAREER & ADULT EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY SERVICES

P.O. BOX 2120
RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY ICONS USED IN THIS MANUAL

ASSESSMENT POLICY

ASSESSMENT REPORTING POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

A. NEED FOR ASSESSMENT POLICY

The assessment policies in this document are designed to guide adult education programs in Virginia. They provide detailed explanations of the state and local program responsibilities for assessment specific to the National Reporting System (NRS) and state requirements. These policies apply to the approved assessments that programs may use to report educational gain in compliance with NRS requirements.

📖 Policy 1.1
Programs must adhere to the assessment policies identified in this document to ensure fair and equitable access to services, practice informed decision making, and identify program improvement needs.

An assessment policy is necessary for several reasons.

- Adults seeking services must be provided fair and equitable access to services. If an assessment is administered incorrectly, the adult may be denied services or placed at an inappropriate level. The result is a learner who may lose an opportunity to be successful or become frustrated by an improper placement. Factors such as the lack of lighting, failure to provide accommodations, overuse of test booklets, or administration of outdated test booklets may cause an inaccurate identification of a learner's level and ability.
- Local providers must make decisions about program quality and the need for improvement at the class, teacher, and learner levels. A goal of the Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) is that all programs providing adult basic education and literacy (ABE) services, including English literacy and civics education (EL/Civics) services, meet or exceed federal and state targets for performance. Proper assessments play a critical role in attaining that goal.
- OAEL must make decisions about the quality of programs and the need for technical assistance. An assessment policy provides a framework for consistency and comparability of programs. In addition, an assessment policy is a piece of a larger programmatic plan that influences areas such as curriculum implementation and content standards development.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Assessments must be reliable and valid. Each of the standardized assessments identified in this policy manual have been reviewed by test publishers and the United States Department of Education (USED) for reliability and validity. Reliability and validity are defined below.

> ***Reliability***: An assessment is reliable if it can consistently measure the skills and abilities across all intended audiences (e.g., ages, ethnicities, gender, location, etc.) for which it was designed. If an assessment produces consistent results in a rural area but not in an urban area, the assessment may not be reliable for use in all areas.

Validity: An assessment is valid if it is administered correctly and accurately measures the skills and abilities for which it was developed. For example, to measure a person's understanding of calculating area, the assessment must provide questions that specifically require the test taker to calculate area. Furthermore, programs must administer locator or appraisal tests or adhere to validity ranges for some assessments to ensure they administer the correct test and to maintain validity of the assessment.

EDUCATIONAL GAIN

The NRS mandates assessment in adult education programs to determine educational functioning level (EFL) gains. NRS identifies twelve EFLs in its accountability measures. Four EFLs are in ABE, two in adult secondary education (ASE), and six in English as a second language (ESL). Each functioning level addresses a general set of standards and competencies that adults must demonstrate to move to the next EFL. Three competency areas are discussed within each EFL. Basic reading and writing skills and functional and workplace skills are included in each EFL. Numeracy is the third competency area in ABE, while speaking and listening, or oral skills, are the third ESL area.

ASE High Completion: Completion of the ASE High functioning level is demonstrated by passing the Tests of General Educational Development (GED Tests), completion of the adult high school diploma, or completion of the National External Diploma Program (NEDP).

ESL Advance Completion: Completion of the ESL Advanced functioning level is demonstrated when a learner post tests beyond the highest scale score reportable for ESL Advanced.

NON-NRS ASSESSMENTS

Programs are encouraged to use additional assessments in support of the teaching and learning process. However, local-level assessments not identified in this document may not be substituted for NRS-approved instruments.

B. PURPOSES AND USES OF ASSESSMENT

Adult learners enter programs with a wide range of educational backgrounds, experiences, and proficiency levels. The purpose of educational assessment is to determine educational functioning for a learner. This determination establishes the learner's functioning level at the time of the assessment, either when first joining a program or after participation in a program for a defined period of instruction. Program administrators and teachers may use assessment information to make decisions about their respective programs. The information may also be used diagnostically to group learners, determine an appropriate course of instruction, or indicate an individual's degree of improvement from one point in time to another. The result is an improved teaching and learning experience.

<u>MEASURE LEARNER KNOWLEDGE AND PROGRESS</u>

Assessments can improve student retention by documenting improvement. Assessments provide the learner with an opportunity to determine the amount of progress that has been made. In terms of content standards, assessment also identifies the knowledge or skills that the learner possesses and helps the teacher develop an educational plan based on that information. However, administrators and teachers must ensure that the assessment administered measures the knowledge or skills that are being taught.

<u>GUIDE AND DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION</u>

Assessments offer staff an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of instruction. When a learner or learners complete an assessment, teachers and administrators are able to identify specific competencies or skills that learners may or may not have mastered. Based on this information, adjustments or realignment of coursework may be required to address the specific competencies and skills that should be introduced or revisited.

<u>MAKE DECISIONS RELATED TO LEARNER, STAFF, AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY</u>

Assessments provide an opportunity to evaluate learners' progress and programmatic and instructional effectiveness. Decisions about the use of specific curriculum, length of instruction, or program location may be made once assessments are completed. Assessment results may also influence funding decisions.

C. SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

Local providers must strictly adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth in this document. The use of approved assessments is required by programs reporting into the NRS Web-based data system. Decisions made at the class, program, and state levels are influenced by the results of these assessments. Unless the assessments are reliable and valid, those decisions may be inappropriate or incorrect. To practice continuous program improvement, local providers should review assessment results regularly. The following tables provide a brief summary of the approved assessments in Virginia for ABE, ASE, and ESL instructional programs. More complete descriptions of each of the assessments are provided in *Section III Guidelines for Each Assessment* (P. 24).

<u>KEY TO TERMS USED IN TABLES</u>

> *Subject(s)* Assessment instruments may test separate subject areas. The specific subjects, applicable to the assessment described, are identified.
>
> *Type of Learner* The applicable instructional program (i.e., ABE, ASE, or ESL) for which the assessment was designed is indicated. Many of the assessments have locator instruments and multiple forms that are acceptable and required depending on the learner's educational functioning level.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Expiration Date Each assessment has a target date for expiration. Expiration dates are subject to change depending on the development of new assessments, updates to existing assessments, or state review and decision.

Pre-test Time All learners must be assessed within a designated time period.

Post-test Time Test publishers have put each assessment through norming processes and reliability/validity studies. Based on these the publishers have established recommended guidelines for when a learner may be post-tested. Additionally, each assessment has established recommended guidelines for when a form may be repeated for post-testing. Post-test times are often dependent upon whether an assessment is being administered to a new or continuing learner. The time identified represents the minimum number of instructional hours required between administration of the pre- and post-tests.

EFL Alignment and NRS Scale Scores The assessments represented have been correlated to specific NRS levels and scale scores. Some assessments may not correlate to all EFLs.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE) AND ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION (ASE) *

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Life Skills		
SUBJECT(S)	Math	
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE	
EXPIRATION DATE	**February 2, 2017**	
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
POST-TEST TIMES	70-100 hours (recommended)	
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Math ☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High	

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Life and Work Series		
SUBJECT(S)	Reading	
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE	
EXPIRATION DATE	**February 2, 2017**	
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
POST-TEST TIMES	70-100 hours (recommended)	
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Reading ☑ ABE Beginning Literacy ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education ☑ ABE Intermediate Low ☑ ABE Intermediate High ☑ ASE Low ☑ ASE High	

General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)			
SUBJECT(S)	English; Math		
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE		
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2015**		
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction		
POST-TEST TIMES	60 hours (recommended)		
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES		English	Math
	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	200-406	200-314
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	407-525	315-522
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	526-661	523-669
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	662-746	670-775
	☑ ASE Low	747-870	776-854
	☑ ASE High	871-1,000	855-1,000

Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Forms 9 and 10, Survey and Battery				
SUBJECT(S)	Reading; Total Math; Language (e.g., Writing)			
TYPE OF LEARNER	ABE; ASE			
EXPIRATION DATE	**February 2, 2017**			
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction			
POST-TEST TIMES	50-60 hours for NRS levels 1-4; 30-59 hours for NRS levels 5 and 6 (minimum – same level, different form) 120 hours (minimum – same level, same form)			
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES		Reading	Total Math	Language
	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	160-367	160-313	160-389
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	368-460	314-441	390-490
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	461-517	442-505	491-523
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	518-566	506-565	524-559
	☑ ASE Low	567-595	566-594	560-585
	☑ ASE High	596-812	595-795	586-826

<u>ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)</u>

Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy	
SUBJECT(S)	Reading and Writing
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL
EXPIRATION DATE	**February 2, 2017**
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction
POST-TEST TIMES	60 hours (minimum) 80-100 hours (recommended)
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Reading and Writing ☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-20 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 21-52 ☑ ESL High Beginning 53-63 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 64-67 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 68-75 ☑ ESL Advanced 76-78*

* Learners that pre- test at the ESL Advanced level should be given a different ESL assessment to more accurately measure reading and writing skills.

Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus		
SUBJECT(S)	Oral (e.g., Speaking and Listening)	
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL	
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2015**	
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
POST-TEST TIMES	60 hours (minimum) 80-100 hours (recommended)	
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Oral ☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-400 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 401-417 ☑ ESL High Beginning 418-438 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 439-472 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 473-506 ☑ ESL Advanced 507-540	Speaking and Listening ☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-400 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 401-417 ☑ ESL High Beginning 418-438 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 439-472 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 473-506 ☑ ESL Advanced 507-540

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) – Life and Work	
SUBJECT(S)	Listening
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL
EXPIRATION DATE	**June 30, 2015**
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction
POST-TEST TIMES	70-100 hours (recommended)
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Listening ☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-180 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 181-190 ☑ ESL High Beginning 191-200 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 201-210 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 211-220 ☑ ESL Advanced 221-235

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Life and Work		
SUBJECT(S)	Reading	
TYPE OF LEARNER	ESL	
EXPIRATION DATE	**February 2, 2017**	
PRE-TEST TIME	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
POST-TEST TIMES	70-100 hours (recommended)	
EFL ALIGNMENT AND NRS SCALE SCORES	Reading	
	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-180	
	☑ ESL Low Beginning 181-190	
	☑ ESL High Beginning 191-200	
	☑ ESL Intermediate Low 201-210	
	☑ ESL Intermediate High 211-220	
	☑ ESL Advanced 221-235	

D. RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Adult Education and Literacy
Telephone: (804) 225-2053
Fax: (804) 225-3352
Toll Free: (800) 292-3820
Web site: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/index.shtml

Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC)
Telephone: (804) 828-6521
Toll Free: (800) 237-0178
Fax: (804) 828-7539
Web site: http://www.valrc.org/

ASSESSMENT DIRECT CONTACTS

BEST Literacy and BEST Plus

Center for Applied Linguistics
Phone: (202) 362-0700
E-mail: info@cal.org
Web site: http://www.cal.org/

CASAS

CASAS
Phone: (858) 292-2900
Phone: (800) 255-1036
E-mail: casas@casas.org
Web site: http://www.casas.org/home/

GAIN

Wonderlic
Phone: (800) 370-9317
E-mail: gain.info@wonderlic.com
Web site: http://www.wonderlic.com/

TABE

CTB/McGraw-Hill
Phone: (800) 538-9547
Web site: http://www.ctb.com/

II.   GENERAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A. LEARNERS TO BE ASSESSED

📖 **Policy 2.1**

Programs must assess all learners reported into the NRS Web-based data system. Assessments must meet the following standards.

- **A pre-test must be administered within the first 6 hours of instruction to 100 percent of all eligible learners seeking services.**
- **A post-test must be administered to a minimum of 70 percent of all eligible learners according to the time frame(s) specified in this policy manual.**
- **All learners continuing to a new fiscal year must have a valid assessment on record on or after July 1 of the previous fiscal year.**

All learners seeking services who will be reported in the NRS Web-based data system must be assessed within the first six hours of instruction on an approved assessment. Selection of assessment(s) should be based on the type of instruction provided to learners. For example, if an ESL learner has instruction primarily in reading, the learner should be assessed on an instrument that measures reading gain for ESL learners.

Programs are not obligated to pre-test individuals in all areas (e.g., reading, mathematics, or writing). However, programs should consider administering assessments in all areas in which instruction is provided. Finally, programs that serve both ABE and ESL learners should consider the selection and use of assessments that will assist learners in successfully bridging the transition from an ESL to an ABE instructional program.

When applicable, a locator or appraisal must be administered before the learner completes the approved assessment. Locators and appraisals should be used as a guide for determining the correct level; however, a qualified assessor may need to exercise some professional judgment when selecting the correct level and form of the approved assessment.

PRE-TESTING

The NRS requires that the state establish a uniform time for programs to pre-test adult learners as the basis for determining accurate placement in an EFL corresponding with NRS definitions. Pre-testing information serves two fundamental purposes. First, it is the baseline upon which programs will measure learners' EFL advancements. Second, pre-test information is used to develop effective instructional plans for each learner.

POST-TESTING

Post-testing is necessary to determine whether or not individual learners make educational progress. This information is useful to the learner, the teacher, and the program manager. It is also one measure of accountability required for NRS purposes. At a minimum, learners should be post-tested in the area in which they pre-tested and in which they received instruction.

Post-testing Time Frame: While some test publishers have established only "recommended" guidelines or other parameters for post-testing time frames, OAEL requires that a learner must meet the minimum attendance requirement (as outlined in the tables in Section I and III of this document) reported in contact hours, to be reported without using a waiver.

<u>POST TESTING WAIVERS</u>

Current time frames for post-testing adult learners have been adopted from NRS recommendations and publisher guidelines. These test-specific time frames are the best estimates of instructional time needed by learners to demonstrate educational gains on the assessments. During the recommended time between pre- and post-testing, learners should receive targeted instruction with sufficient intensity to make gains during an instructional session. While this policy promotes aligning assessment, goal-setting, and instruction to maximize student gains, it also acknowledges that exceptions to the recommended time frame for post-testing exist.

Waivers are a means to allow post-testing prior to the time requirements set forth by the test publishers. The guidelines for using waivers are meant to capture learner gains where intensity of instruction warrants post-testing or where learners indicate they intend to leave a program after achieving a follow-up goal. They are not intended to be used to circumvent publishers' recommendations or lessen retention efforts.

📖 **Policy 2.2**
In certain, limited cases, programs may waive the test publisher's recommended contact hour requirement for post-testing a learner.

Requirements for Using a Waiver

In order for a learner to be post-tested before the required time frame for a given assessment, he or she must have the required number of contact or proxy (distance education) hours and meet the criteria for exceptions established for each assessment, identified in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Table 2.1 Contact or Proxy Hours

Assessment Instrument	Subject	Program Type	Time Requirement Waiver Range
BEST Literacy	Reading and Writing	ESL	No exception to the 60 hour minimum
BEST Plus	Oral (e.g., Speaking and Listening)	ESL	No exception to the 60 hour minimum
CASAS Life and Work Series	Reading; Listening	ESL	40 – 69 hours
CASAS Life and Work Series; Life Skills (math only)	Reading; Mathematics	ABE/ASE	40 – 69 hours
GAIN	English; Math	ABE/ASE	No exception to the 60 hour minimum
TABE	Reading; Total Mathematics; Language	ABE/ASE	40 - 49 hours for learners at NRS levels 1-4; no exception for learners at NRS levels 5 and 6

Table 2.2 Criteria for Exceptions

Assessment Instrument	Exception to the required time frame for post-testing
BEST Literacy	No exceptions allowed
BEST Plus	No exceptions allowed
CASAS Life and Work Series; Life Skills (math only)	• Learner reports obtaining a follow-up goal and indicates he or she will therefore exit the program, or • Program reaches the end of an instructional session
GAIN	No exceptions allowed
TABE	Learner pre-tested at NRS levels 1-4, and • Reports obtaining a follow-up goal and indicates he or she will therefore exit the program • No exceptions allowed for NRS levels 5 and 6

Waiver Limitations and Monitoring

Programs must make every effort to insure that learners meet publisher guidelines for instructional hours between pre- and post-test administration. To that end, the use of waivers for post-testing should be limited and rare. OAEL staff will monitor the use of waivers by programs throughout the Commonwealth. Programs that are found to be relying on excessive waiver usage will be contacted and provided technical assistance focused on the reduction of waiver reliance. A program may be required to submit an action plan subsequent to such technical assistance.

Waiver Reporting

📖 **Policy 2.3**
Documentation of the use of a waiver, including the name of the authorizing staff member, the date, and the reason, must be included in the file of each learner receiving a waiver.

Local programs must report the use of waivers into the NRS Web-based data system. The name of the staff member responsible for administering the assessment and the reason for the waiver must be entered into the NRS Web-based data system (see policy 3.1). Programs are encouraged to conduct regular reviews of their data to monitor their use of waivers.

PROGRAM EXIT

📖 **Policy 2.4**
Programs must administer a new pre-test for any learner who has spent 90 or more consecutive days without reported program attendance.

Gaps in program attendance are likely to affect the learner's EFL. A learner must receive program services and have continuous attendance identified in the NRS Web-based data system for the last assessment of record to be used for measuring EFL gain. In situations where a learner has continuous attendance across fiscal years, his/her previous assessment may be used for measuring educational gain against a current post-test. However, if a learner has a gap of 90 or more consecutive days without attendance (within or across fiscal years), the learner must be administered a new pre-test to establish the current EFL.

B. ASSESSMENTS PERMITTED

📖 **Policy 2.5**
- **An assessment must be approved by both USED and OAEL.**
- **Programs must administer to adult learners only those assessments that are NRS and state approved.**
- **All approved assessments must be administered in English.**

The following assessment instruments, correlated to subject areas and program type, are accepted for measuring and reporting EFL performance and progress into NRS. Only the assessment instruments identified here may be used for these purposes. *OAEL reserves the right not to permit the use of an assessment even when the assessment is approved by the U. S. Department of Education*. See page 5 for information on non-NRS assessments.

Assessment Instrument	Subject	Program Type
BEST Literacy	Reading and Writing	ESL
BEST Plus	Oral (e.g., Speaking and Listening)	ESL
CASAS Life and Work Series	Reading; Listening	ESL
CASAS Life and Work Series; Life Skills	Reading; Mathematics	ABE/ASE
GAIN	English; Mathematics	ABE/ASE
TABE	Reading; Total Mathematics; Language	ABE/ASE

Each assessment identified has been selected because it meets the following criteria:

- Is appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult learners
- Has standardized administration and scoring procedures
- Has alternate, equivalent forms for pre- and post-testing
- Has evidence linking it to NRS EFL

Effective July 1, 2014, the following tests are no longer approved for use in the NRS and have been eliminated from Virginia's assessment policy.

- CASAS Life Skills, Listening
- WorkKeys, Reading and Applied Mathematics

NEW INSTRUMENTS AND TEST FORMS

As assessments are reviewed and approved at the federal level for NRS reporting, OAEL reserves the right to review and consider the impact of approving them for state use and reporting. A review of approved NRS assessments will be considered between September and December annually, as needed. If necessary, OAEL will conduct a pilot test of any assessment considered for its review.

C. TRAINING FOR ADMINISTRATION OF ASSESSMENTS

ASSESSMENT STAFFING

 📖 **Policy 2.6**

All approved local programs must at all times have at least one active staff member trained and qualified to administer any approved assessment that the program uses.

As learners request services in approved programs, staff must be available to administer assessments. Because staff or volunteers in the majority of approved programs are part-time, having at least one staff member qualified to administer assessments remains critical. The most logical staff member to be qualified is the local program manager or director. It is recommended that the local program manager or director and one other designated staff member (at the minimum) be trained to administer the approved NRS assessment(s) that the program uses.

📖 **Policy 2.7**

All staff members who administer approved assessments in a program must:
- **successfully complete OAEL-approved training on this assessment policy and other specific, identified topics[1] prior to administering any approved assessments;**
- **successfully complete the training on the approved assessment(s) the program uses**
- **successfully administer and score five assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment**
- **successfully complete requalification training to administer assessment(s) every two years.**

Staff must complete training on the assessment policies for Virginia and must be qualified in each area in which they plan to administer assessments. The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) coordinates approved training. Assessment training opportunities are available throughout each fiscal year. Training provided by VALRC is most often provided without charge to the local program or participants. Online training opportunities are available for selected assessments.

NEW STAFF

Staff new to adult education programs and learner assessments may not have the experience of administering assessments for identification of educational gain. Consequently, new staff must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

QUALIFIED ASSESSORS

A staff member is considered a qualified assessor upon successful completion of assessment training and supervision of the first five assessments administered. All staff members who continue to administer assessments must re-certify on assessment administration at least once every **two** years. Local programs must submit identification of qualified assessors via the NRS Web-based data system. A report is available in the data system to monitor when staff members are required to complete re-qualification training.

TRAINING DATA

Training data will be collected, reported, and maintained by the local approved programs, VALRC, and OAEL. Each of these organizations plays a critical role in supporting proper professional development related to policy understanding and application.

---

[1] Training topics will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following topics: NRS policy; accountability policies and the data collection process; definitions of measures; and conducting assessments.

<u>C</u><small>OLLECTION</small>

Learner Assessment – Policies
VALRC will record data related to all staff who have completed assessment policy training through the online modules. A training log of staff who have completed the assessment policy training must indicate the participant's name, address, e-mail address, program affiliation, and date of training. Program managers will be responsible for notifying staff when re-qualification is required.

Learner Assessment – Approved NRS Assessments
VALRC will record data related to all staff that has completed assessment training on approved NRS assessments. A training log of staff completing the assessment training must indicate the participant's name, address, e-mail address, and program affiliation. VALRC will maintain a list of certified trainers available to complete training for staff. The trainer, certified to administer the assessment training must be identified on the training log. The training log must also identify the date of the training. If training is contracted locally, the same information must be collected on a log and returned to VALRC for processing. Program managers will be responsible for notifying staff when re-qualification is required.

<u>R</u><small>EPORTING</small>

Policy 2.8
Approved programs must report and maintain the following information related to assessment training:
- **Local programs must report into the NRS Web-based Data System all staff trained on the assessment policy and an approved NRS assessment within 30 days of training completion.**
- **Local programs must maintain a training log that identifies the five students (minimum) who were initially administered an assessment by the newly trained assessor. The log must identify the test type, date administered, and the student's number as assigned in the NRS data system.**

Training Review and Validation
OAEL will regularly review and validate local staff participation in required trainings on the assessment policy and approved NRS assessments.

D. ACCOMMODATING FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

📖 **Policy 2.9**

Learners with professionally certified documentation, issued within five years prior to program registration, who self-disclose a given physical, mental, or emotional disability must be provided an appropriate accommodation for assessment of EFL.

Adults with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities may not be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a standardized test administration and/or with a standard test format. In order to accurately reflect their true EFL, adults with professionally certified documentation identifying disabilities should receive accommodations based on their disability. Providing accommodations to adults with documented disabilities will result in a more accurate assessment of their EFLs.

If a learner self-discloses a disability and provides valid, corroborating documentation, it is the responsibility of the local program to provide reasonable accommodations. Local programs may not deny or prevent access to services based on a learner's disability. The local program may be required to absorb the costs related to the accommodation(s). By not providing an accommodation, programs could find themselves in violation of federal law for failure to provide appropriate accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities.

IDENTIFYING DOCUMENTATION

Learners who self-disclose a physical, mental, or emotional disability must provide certified documentation issued within five years prior to program registration. Documentation must include a letter on official letterhead, signed by a certifying professional who specializes in the diagnosis of the disability. Documentation should identify the learner's history with the disability or limitation, report the learner's current ability level, discuss the reason(s) for accommodation, and indicate the specific recommendation(s). The documentation should indicate how long to provide an accommodation. The most common forms of documentation include:

- professional diagnostician's identification indicating the appropriate DSM-IV-TR Code*;
- psychological assessment report; and
- physical ability report.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a handbook published by the American Psychiatric Association and used by mental health professionals worldwide. The DSM categorizes mental disorders and the criteria for diagnosing them. Diagnosticians use DSM codes to identify specific disorders.

Support documents may include:

- individualized educational plan (IEP); and
- 504 Plan.

Certifying professionals include psychologists, psychiatrists, clinicians, diagnosticians, general practitioners, or other medical physicians.

PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING LEARNERS

When the program believes a learner has a disability, but documentation does not exist to identify the disability and the need for accommodations, the local program may elect to conduct screening. It is the responsibility of the local program to inform the learner of the reasons for being screened. If a learner is screened selectively by the program, the learner must provide signed consent agreeing to be screened. The signed consent must indicate clearly who will have access to the information identified in the screening

Screening
During the intake process or first few days of class preceding an assessment, learners may participate in individual or group screening. Screening considers various factors of a learner's physical, mental, and emotional ability to determine if a potential disability exists. Screening may not indicate that the learner has a disability and should not be considered a diagnosis. It may indicate the need for further testing by a certified professional to make an official diagnosis.

Once the screening has been completed, it is the responsibility of the local program staff to discuss the results with the learner. A discussion of observations with the learner should be completed in a private setting. Local program staff should be careful not to suggest a diagnosis or assign a label to the learner. If it appears that the learner may require further diagnostic testing, the local program staff should offer to provide the learner with a referral to an appropriate organization or agency.

If a program provides a diagnosis or labels a learner as having a "disability," the program may be obligated to pay for the learner's official diagnosis by a qualified diagnostician.

Diagnostic Testing
A certified professional performs diagnostic testing that may result in an official diagnosis of a disability or special need. Local programs may not have professionals on staff with the credentials to make an official diagnosis. At no point should local program staff offer an official diagnosis to a learner.

TYPES OF SCREENING

There are several forms of screening for physical, mental, and emotional disabilities that may be either apparent or hidden. These screenings may occur formally or informally. The local program or outside providers may conduct the screening depending on staff knowledge and available resources. Common screening methods include:

- Vision screening
- Dental screening
- Basic physical screening
- Learner observations – assignment completion and work samples
- Counseling sessions – formally or informally before, during, and after instruction
- Learner communication – comments or questions

The *Bridges to Practice* project developed detailed information and materials regarding screening and various types of instruments specific to learning disabilities. *Bridges to Practice* was developed by the National Institute for Literacy. The materials are designed to help teachers, social workers, employment counselors, job coaches, and others recognize learning disabilities, learn how to implement a screening process in a program, and learn what to do when an adult has been diagnosed with a disability. Local program staff may want to contact a local entity that conducts diagnostic testing for further information about screening.

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Most test publishers provide recommendations or guidelines for accommodating various disabilities. Local providers should review the specific test publisher guidelines for identified accommodations and the publisher's available resources.

The most common forms of accommodations include:

- Extended time
- Private room
- Use of a standard calculator or talking calculator
- One test per day
- Scribe
- Audio version
- Braille version
- Large print version

Additionally, learners should have an opportunity to use test-taking aides that do not affect the administration of the test. Test aides include:

- Magnifying glasses/lenses/sheet
- Clear and/or colored overlays
- Straight-edge
- Adhesive notes/flags
- Highlighters

- Visor
- Earplugs

<u>ADMINISTERING ACCOMMODATIONS</u>

The local program should consult the test publisher guidelines before testing to ensure that approved accommodations for the learner are permitted. In addition to meeting all of the standard requirements and policies related to assessing learners, the following administrative processes must be followed.

Access
It is the responsibility of the local program staff to provide the learner with access to the appropriate accommodations once the official diagnosis has been made by a certified professional and the documentation has been provided to the program. Local program staff must provide adequate staff and resources for the variety of accommodations permitted. Separate testing rooms and additional staff during extended time are two common examples. The time and cost of accommodations should be considered when planning a budget, especially when an interpreter or an audio version of an assessment may be required. .

Reporting
As with standard assessments, local program staff must report the results of the assessments administered with accommodations. The results must be reported on the student intake form and in the NRS Web-based data system. Both the student intake form and the data system provide an opportunity to indicate when an accommodation is granted and the type(s) of accommodation provided.

Monitoring and Review
Local program staff should monitor and review the results of the use of accommodations. When possible, local program staff should follow-up with learners to get their reactions and observations concerning the accommodation(s). Based on this information, the program can assess if the accommodations were appropriate. Changes to the test environment or staff assisting with the accommodations may be necessary. As learners begin to recognize the value in having accommodations, an increased demand may result and require the allocation of additional resources. Finally, local program staff may need to create or enhance collaborations with other organizations to provide accommodations.

III.   GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Each assessment has specific administration procedures. Procedures have been established to maintain the reliability and validity of each assessment. Time limits, uses of locators, and alternating forms have all been designed and established to provide each learner with an equal opportunity to find success. The procedures for each assessment are identified on the following pages. Local programs should pay special attention to the training requirements and when accommodations may be provided. The following is a brief explanation of each category presented.

Assessment Name   The full, official name of the assessment is identified for reference.

Applicable Program   The applicable program for which the assessment was designed is indicated.

Subject   Assessment instruments may have separate subject areas developed for testing. The specific subject is identified here.

Active Date and Expiration Date   Each assessment has a date at which it was approved for use. Additionally, each assessment has a target date for expiration. Expiration dates are subject to change depending on the development of new assessments, updates to existing assessments, or state review and decision.

Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges   While assessments may measure skills at a variety of levels, the assessments represented have been correlated to specific NRS levels. Programs may only report scores for assessments administered at applicable level(s) and in applicable subject(s) as defined by test publisher guidelines and this policy. The correlated scale score ranges for each applicable NRS level are identified.

Version Available   Assessments may be available in computer-assisted or printed versions. In some cases, the computer-assisted version is available for use on a local computer or online.

Administration Type   Some assessments may only be administered to learners individually, while other assessments may be administered individually or in a group setting.

Administration Time   Each assessment has an estimated completion time. Many assessments also have specific time limits for learner completion of individual subtests within a battery (when applicable).

Locator/Appraisal Required   A locator or an appraisal is often required to determine the specific level and/or form to administer to the learner before the approved assessment is administered. Locators require a specific amount of time to complete. When applicable, a locator or appraisal must be administered before the learner completes the approved assessment. Locators and appraisals should be used as a guide for determining the correct

level; however, a qualified assessor may need to exercise some professional judgment when selecting the correct level and form of the approved assessment.

Forms Available   Most assessments have more than one form available to address post-testing learners. Different forms provide an opportunity to assess learners on similar but different questions within the same skill sets. When applicable, a notation regarding required form repetition or differentiation for post-testing learners is described.

Length before Pre-test   All learners must be assessed within a designated time frame.

Length before Post-test   Each assessment, through norming processes and reliability/validity studies, has established guidelines for when a learner may be post-tested. Additionally, each assessment has established guidelines for when a form may be repeated for post-testing. All post-testing time frames indicate the minimum number of instructional hours required between the administration of the pre- and post-tests.

Post-test Form Repetition   Describes the requirements, when applicable, for post-testing using alternate forms of the assessment.

Waiver Option   Identifies the time and condition(s) when a waiver of the post-test time frame may be exercised for post-testing.

Item Type/Content   A brief overview of the main concepts and skills of each assessment are identified. This is not comprehensive.

Scoring Procedures   Each assessment has defined scoring procedures. Some assessments only provide a manual scoring process with conversions of raw scores to scale scores. However, a few assessments are scored using a computer (with or without a scanner) or online.

Accommodations   A few assessments identify accommodations that may be made for learners with special needs.

Training Requirements   All assessors must complete the identified training before administering the assessment(s).

B. IDENTIFYING EACH ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT NAME	BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST) LITERACY
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Reading and Writing
Active Date	July 1, 2006
Expiration Date	February 2, 2017
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-20 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 21-52 ☑ ESL High Beginning 53-63 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 64-67 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 68-75 ☑ ESL Advanced 76-78*
Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately) *(Lower literacy levels may take a shorter amount of time.)*
Locator/Appraisal Required	No
Forms Available	B, C, and D
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours minimum; 80-100 hours recommended
Post-test Form Repetition	Forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test.
Waiver Option	None
Item Type/Content	The BEST Long Form – Literacy addresses reading and writing skills of English language learners. The learner must respond to and interpret everyday life reading and writing tasks. Examples of content include labels, items in a newspaper, addressing an envelope, and completing a simple application.
Scoring Procedures	Two skill areas are measured: Reading and Writing. Reviewers rate responses using rubrics on the specific part of the assessment. A raw score is generated and converted to a scale score. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for the BEST Literacy must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

* Learners who pre-test at the ESL Advanced level should be assessed on a different ESL assessment to more accurately measure reading and writing skills.

ASSESSMENT NAME	BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST) PLUS
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Oral (e.g., Speaking and Listening)
Active Date	July 1, 2004
Expiration Date	June 30, 2015
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-400 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 401-417 ☑ ESL High Beginning 418-438 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 439-472 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 473-506 ☑ ESL Advanced 507-540
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer); Print *(Programs are encouraged to use the computer-assisted version.)*
Administration Type	Individual
Administration Time	3-20 minutes (approximately – depending on the learner's ability)
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes (print only, time varies) – A locator assesses the level of questions for the learner (levels 1, 2, or 3).
Forms Available	Computer-assisted: Adaptive questions respond to the learner's ability. Print: A, B, and C
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	60 hours minimum; 80-100 hours recommended
Post-test Form Repetition	Forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test *(print version only)*.
Waiver Option	None
Item Type/Content	The BEST Plus – Oral addresses speaking and listening skills of English language learners. The learner must respond to and interpret everyday life tasks in personal, occupational, and public areas. Examples of content include health, parenting, employment, citizenship, and transportation.
Scoring Procedures	Computer-assisted: Learner responses are identified, rated on a scoring rubric by the reviewer, and then entered into the computer. Print: All rated responses by the reviewer must be entered into the scoring software for conversion to a scale score. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for BEST Plus must complete the training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

ASSESSMENT NAME	COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE AND WORK
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Listening
Active Date	July 1, 2008
Expiration Date	June 30, 2015

Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy 0-180 ☑ ESL Low Beginning 181-190 ☑ ESL High Beginning 191-200 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low 201-210 ☑ ESL Intermediate High 211-220 ☑ ESL Advanced 221-235

Version Available	Print; Computer-based
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	30 – 40 minutes (approximately)
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes – Appraisal Form 80; eTests CAT Appraisal (30 minutes)
Forms Available	Life Skills Forms 81-86, Levels A, B, and C (A is the lowest level)
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	70-100 hours (recommended)
Post-test Form Repetition	Forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test. The Life and Work Series may not be compared to the Life Skills series.
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 14 and 15 for conditional descriptions.
Item Type/Content	CASAS Life and Work Series – Listening is an assessment of comprehension for English language learners in everyday life skills. The assessment is administered by test booklet (level A only) and compact disc (CD). It includes items such as identifying a similar statement, answering a question, finishing a conversation, and making meaning from a dialogue.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Adjust environment and some procedures but not format. Large or enhanced print, Braille, audio editions are available or being developed. *(See administrator's guide or contact CASAS for a complete description.)*
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for CASAS Life and Work Series – Listening must complete the training workshop provided by CASAS. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

ASSESSMENT NAME	COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE AND WORK SERIES
Applicable Program	ESL
Subject	Reading
Active Date	July 1, 2008
Expiration Date	February 02, 2017
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ESL Beginning Literacy　　　0-180 ☑ ESL Low Beginning　　　181-190 ☑ ESL High Beginning　　　191-200 ☑ ESL Intermediate Low　　　201-210 ☑ ESL Intermediate High　　　211-220 ☑ ESL Advanced　　　221-235
Version Available	Print; Computer-based
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately)
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes – Appraisal Form 80; eTests CAT Appraisal (25 minutes)
Forms Available	Life and Work Series Forms 27R, 28R, 81-86R, 185-188R; Levels A-D (AX and BX are bridges to the next level)
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	70-100 hours (recommended)
Post-test Form Repetition	Forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test. The Life and Work Series may not be compared to the Life Skills series.
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 14 and 15 for conditional descriptions.
Item Type/Content	CASAS Life and Work Series – Reading is an assessment of reading comprehension for adult basic education learners in everyday life skills. The assessment requires learners to scan and interpret functional items such as charts, forms, signs, and other types of reading samples.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Adjust environment and some procedures but not format. Large or enhanced print, Braille, audio editions are available or being developed. *(See administrator's guide or contact CASAS for a complete description.)*
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for CASAS Life and Work Series – Reading must complete the training workshop provided by CASAS. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

ASSESSMENT NAME	COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE AND WORK SERIES
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Reading
Active Date	July 1, 2008
Expiration Date	February 2, 2017
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy 0-200 ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education 201-210 ☑ ABE Intermediate Low 211-220 ☑ ABE Intermediate High 221-235 ☑ ASE Low 236-245 ☑ ASE High 246-269
Version Available	Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately)
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes – Appraisal Form 80; eTests CAT Appraisal (25 minutes)
Forms Available	Life and Work Series Forms 27R, 28R, 81-86R, 185-188R; Levels A-D (AX and BX are bridges to the next level)
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	70-100 hours (recommended)
Post-test Form Repetition	Forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test. The Life and Work Series may not be compared to the Life Skills series.
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 14 and 15 for conditional descriptions.
Item Type/Content	CASAS Life and Work Series – Reading is an assessment of reading comprehension for adult basic education learners in everyday life skills. The assessment requires learners to scan and interpret functional items such as charts, forms, signs, and other types of reading samples.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Adjust environment and some procedures but not format. Large or enhanced print, Braille, audio editions are available or being developed. *(See administrator's guide or contact CASAS for a complete description.)*
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for CASAS Life and Work Series – Reading must complete the training workshop provided by CASAS. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

ASSESSMENT NAME	COMPREHENSIVE ADULT STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (CASAS) LIFE SKILLS*
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Mathematics
Active Date	July 1, 2003
Expiration Date	February 2, 2017
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy 0-200 ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education 201-210 ☑ ABE Intermediate Low 211-220 ☑ ABE Intermediate High 221-235 ☑ ASE Low 236-245 ☑ ASE High 246-268
Version Available	Print; Computer-based
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time	1 hour (approximately)
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes – Appraisal Form 30; eTests CAT Appraisal (25-30minutes)
Forms Available	Life Skills Series Forms 31-38; Levels A-D
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	70-100 hours (recommended)
Post-test Form Repetition	Forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test. The Life and Work Series may not be compared to the Life Skills series.
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 14 and 15 for conditional descriptions.
Item Type/Content	CASAS Life Skills – Math is an assessment of math skills for adult basic education learners in everyday life skills. The assessment requires learners to perform basic computation, apply formulas, use basic algebra, locate information on a chart, table, or graph, and solve word problems.
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct learner responses are converted into scale scores. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Adjust environment and some procedures but not format. Large or enhanced print, Braille, audio editions are available or being developed. (*See administrator's guide or contact CASAS for a complete description.*)
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for CASAS Life Skills – Mathematics must complete the training workshop provided by CASAS. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

* As of January 2009, a CASAS Life and Work Series math assessment is currently in development.

ASSESSMENT NAME	GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS (GAIN)	
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE	
Subject	English	
Active Date	July 1, 2011	
Expiration Date	June 30, 2015	
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	200-406
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	407-525
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	526-661
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	662-746
	☑ ASE Low	747-870
	☑ ASE High	871-1,000
Version Available	Computer-assisted (online); Print	
Administration Type	Individual or Group	
Administration Time	45 minutes	
Locator/Appraisal Required	No	
Forms Available	Forms A and B	
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
Length before Post-test	60 hours (same level, different form)	
Post-test Form Repetition	Generally, forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test. If retesting is necessary, 60 days must transpire before using the same form.	
Waiver Option	No.	
Item Type/Content	General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN) – The Test of English consists of two subscales and eight categories. The Grammar/Usage/Style subscale includes items to evaluate skills dealing with parts of speech, proofreading for grammatical errors, punctuation/capitalization, and sentence structure. Items in the reading subscale deal with information retrieval, letter and word recognition, reading comprehension, and words in context. Questions are in a multiple-choice format.	
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. Scoring is completed online for online administrations. Print administrations can be scored online or through a "fax back" system.	
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.	
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for GAIN must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by Wonderlic. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment. Certification is valid for two years.	

ASSESSMENT NAME	GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL NEEDS (GAIN)	
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE	
Subject	Mathematics	
Active Date	July 1, 2011	
Expiration Date	June 30, 2015	
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	200-314
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	315-522
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	523-669
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	670-775
	☑ ASE Low	776-854
	☑ ASE High	855-1,000
Version Available	Computer-assisted (online); Print	
Administration Type	Individual or Group	
Administration Time	45 minutes	
Locator/Appraisal Required	No	
Forms Available	Forms A and B	
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
Length before Post-test	60 hours (same level, different form)	
Post-test Form Repetition	Generally, forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test. If retesting is necessary, 60 days must transpire before using the same form.	
Waiver Option	No.	
Item Type/Content	General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN) – General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN) – The Test of Math Skills consists of 75 questions in three subscales and eight categories. The three subscales are Arithmetic, Rational Numbers, Operations, & Charts/Graphs, and Algebra, Geometry, & Trigonometry. Questions are in a multiple-choice format.	
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. Scoring is completed online for online administrations. Print administrations can be scored online or through a "fax back" system.	
Accommodations	See administrator's guide.	
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for GAIN must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by Wonderlic. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment. Certification is valid for two years.	

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ASSESSMENT NAME	TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE) FORMS 9 AND 10	
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE	
Subject	Reading	
Active Date	July 1, 2005	
Expiration Date	February 2, 2017	
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy	160-367
	☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education	368-460
	☑ ABE Intermediate Low	461-517
	☑ ABE Intermediate High	518-566
	☑ ASE Low	567-595
	☑ ASE High	596-812
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer and online); Print	
Administration Type	Individual or Group	
Administration Time Guidelines	Complete Battery: 50 minutes Survey: 25 minutes	
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes (12 minutes)	
Forms Available	Forms 9 and 10: Complete Battery or Survey (Levels L, E, M, D, A – Complete Battery or Survey)	
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction	
Length before Post-test	50-60 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 1-4; 30-59 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 5 and 6 (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)	
Post-test Form Repetition	Generally, forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test – see post-test information above; additionally, the level must be adjusted based on the total number of correct responses.	
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 15 and 16 for conditional descriptions.	
Item Type/Content	Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – Reading focuses on reading items from everyday life, work, and other fictional and non-fictional content. Visual items are included in the reading items. With different levels, the information increases in complexity. Questions are in a multiple-choice format.	
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. For the score to be valid, it must fall in the acceptable range for the form and level as established by the publisher. Scoring is completed in one of three ways: (1) manually - carbonless answer sheet or scoring stencil; (2) scanning - scan the answer sheet with scoring software; (3) online - scored automatically by the online software. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)	
Accommodations	Large Print, Braille, Audio editions are available.	
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for TABE – Reading must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.	

ASSESSMENT NAME	TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE) FORMS 9 AND 10
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Total Mathematics
Active Date	July 1, 2005
Expiration Date	February 2, 2017
Applicable NRS Levels and Scale Score Ranges	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy 160-313 ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education 314-441 ☑ ABE Intermediate Low 442-505 ☑ ABE Intermediate High 506-565 ☑ ASE Low 566-594 ☑ ASE High 595-795
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer and online); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time Guidelines	Complete Battery: 24 minutes (Computation); 50 minutes (Applied) Survey: 15 minutes (Computation); 24 minutes (Applied)
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes (12 minutes)
Forms Available	Forms 9 and 10: Complete Battery or Survey (Levels L, E, M, D, A – Complete Battery or Survey)
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	50-60 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 1-4; 30-59 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 5 and 6 (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)
Post-test Form Repetition	Generally, forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test – see post-test information above; additionally, the level must be adjusted based on the total number of correct responses.
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 15 and 16 for conditional descriptions.
Item Type/Content	Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – Total Mathematics focuses on mathematical items from everyday life, the world of work, and other familiar contexts. Visual items are included, such as charts, graphs, or documents. With different levels, the information increases in complexity. Questions are in a multiple-choice format.
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. For the score to be valid, it must fall in the acceptable range for the form and level as established by the publisher. Scoring is completed in one of three ways: (1) manually - carbonless answer sheet or scoring stencil; (2) scanning - scan the answer sheet with scoring software; (3) online - scored automatically by the online software. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Large Print, Braille, Audio editions are available.
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for TABE – Reading must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

ASSESSMENT NAME	TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE)
Applicable Program	ABE; ASE
Subject	Language
Active Date	July 1, 2005
Expiration Date	February 2, 2017

Applicable NRS Levels	☑ ABE Beginning Literacy　　　　　　160-389 ☑ ABE Beginning Basic Education　　390-490 ☑ ABE Intermediate Low　　　　　　491-523 ☑ ABE Intermediate High　　　　　　524-559 ☑ ASE Low　　　　　　　　　　　　560-585 ☑ ASE High　　　　　　　　　　　　586-826
Version Available	Computer-assisted (local computer and online); Print
Administration Type	Individual or Group
Administration Time Guidelines	Complete Battery: 55 minutes Survey: 25 minutes
Locator/Appraisal Required	Yes (12 minutes)
Forms Available	Forms 9 and 10: Complete Battery or Survey (Levels L, E, M, D, A – Complete Battery or Survey)
Length before Pre-test	Within first 6 hours of instruction
Length before Post-test	50-60 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 1-4; 30-59 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 5 and 6 (same level, different form) 120 hours (same level, same form)
Post-test Form Repetition	Generally, forms may not be repeated and must be alternated when administering a post-test – see post-test information above; additionally, the level must be adjusted based on the total number of correct responses.
Waiver Option	Yes. See pages 15 and 16 for conditional descriptions.
Item Type/Content	Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) – Language (Writing) addresses the use, mechanics, formation, and development of English in life and the world of work. Items reflect the modern writing process, including editing. With different levels, the information increases in complexity. Questions are in a multiple-choice format.
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting. For the score to be valid, it must fall in the acceptable range for the form and level as established by the publisher. Scoring is completed in one of three ways: (1) manually - carbonless answer sheet or scoring stencil; (2) scanning - scan the answer sheet with scoring software; (3) online - scored automatically by the online software. (*Scale score determines EFL.*)
Accommodations	Large Print, Braille, Audio editions are available.
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for TABE – Reading must complete either an online or in-person training workshop provided by VALRC. After successfully completing the workshop, participants must successfully administer and score five learner assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment.

C. ASSESSMENT REPORTING

📖 💻 Policy 3.1

Programs must score and report <u>each</u> NRS assessment (pre- and/or post-test) administered to learners within a reasonable time frame. Assessments must be scored within seven business days of the test administration and reported within 30 business days during the fiscal year. The assessment must be reported in the Web-based data system. Each reported assessment must identify the following.

- **Test type**
- **Test date**
- **Test subject**
- **Test form**
- **Pre/Post-test**
- **Scale Score**

- **Test administrator/staff**
- **Test identification**
- **Post-test waiver and justification (if applicable)**
- **Accommodation use and type (if applicable)**

It is the responsibility of local programs to ensure timely assessment of learners both at program start and program completion. In addition, proper reporting of learner assessments in the NRS Web-based data system allows local programs to verify the correct administration of assessments and to take corrective action, if needed, as soon as possible.

EFL IDENTIFICATION

When programs report learner assessments in the NRS Web-based data system, only scale scores may be reported for determining EFL. Raw scores, grade equivalents, and learner performance levels (SPLs) may not be reported. Once the scale score is entered into the data system, the learner's EFL will be identified. This EFL serves as the basis from which educational gains will be measured. Local programs should discuss educational levels and assessment results with learners using the scale scores.

PRE-TEST VERSUS POST-TEST IDENTIFICATION

The assessment administered should measure and be reflective of the skills developed in an instructional program. The first assessment administered to the learner is identified in the NRS Web-based data system as a pre-test for learners who attend the program for the first time. If the learner has continuous attendance, the next assessment administered is identified in the data system as a post-test. Should the learner continue in the program with the same program of study, each subsequent assessment is coded as a post-test. When a learner begins a new program of study (e.g., reading to math), a different assessment should be administered. If a new assessment is administered, the assessment should be coded as a pre-test.

<u>LOWEST EFL AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM OF STUDY</u>

If a learner is assessed in more than one area and scale scores reflect different EFLs, the learner shall be reported in the EFL represented by the lowest test score and instruction shall be provided to learner in that area, at a minimum.

<u>TEST TYPE OR SUBJECT CHANGE</u>

Learners may be assessed on more than one subject of an assessment or on different assessments during the fiscal year. This type of situation might occur when an ESL learner works on speaking and listening skills in the first part of the year and transitions to a reading focus in the second part of the year. To demonstrate educational gains, the learner should complete an oral assessment to begin the year and a reading assessment in the second part. Staff must understand, however, that the results from different assessments may not be compared to one another to measure educational gain. For example, a CASAS – Reading for an ESL learner may not be compared to a BEST Plus.

<u>REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT INFORMATION IN THE DATA SYSTEM</u>

The NRS Web-based data system has error checks programmed into the system related to assessment reporting. Out-of-range scale scores, incorrect forms, and inappropriate post-test times are recognized by the system so that the local program will know when an assessment has been administered improperly. Additionally, the data system provides exports of data and reports with detailed information related to learner, staff, and class performance related to assessments. Local programs should review these reports after each entry of learner assessment information to identify areas for improvement in assessment administration and instructor performance.

D. QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES

<u>TEST ENVIRONMENT</u>

 Policy 3.2
Programs must provide locations used for assessment that maximize the opportunity for learners to demonstrate educational functioning level.

To ensure the reliability and validity of testing results, it is important that the environment be conducive to testing. Learners' performances may be adversely affected if the room in which they test is too cold, too hot, or poorly lighted. At a minimum, the following conditions should be available during testing.

- Appropriately sized room to properly accommodate the number of test takers
- Room location with reduced noise and distractions
- Proper room lighting
- Comfortable room temperature
- Appropriately sized tables and chairs

- Access to a rest room
- Clock or other timing device visible to test taker(s)
- Chalk board, white board, or overhead projector
- Sufficient staffing for assistance

TEST SECURITY

 Policy 3.3
Programs must have a written test security policy on file that includes information about proper storage of, the proper handling of, and the regular maintenance of assessment materials.

The integrity and security of a program's assessment system is critical to ensure that assessment results are true indicators of learner performance. Poor management of assessment materials or poor administration practices may result in inaccurate assessment results. Such results would not be considered reliable or valid and could result in program sanctions.

All assessment-related materials (e.g., answer sheets, test booklets, norms booklets, and answer keys) should be secured and inventoried on a regular basis. To secure materials, programs should provide lockable storage that is not accessible to learners or the public. Access to assessment materials should be limited to qualified assessment staff. Only those materials specifically needed for a test administration should be removed from the locked storage. Completed learner answer sheets and scratch paper are considered secure materials and should be handled accordingly. Test booklets should be reviewed after each test administration for stray marks, missing pages, recorded answers, and overall condition. Any test booklet deemed unusable should be shredded. Generally, test booklets should be replaced after 15 to 20 administrations.

> *Security Guidelines*
> Local programs should adhere to the test publisher guidelines when securing assessments and related materials. The following are intended to guide assessment staff concerning issues that would constitute a breach of test security.
>
> - Learners must not be exposed to test items or to the answers of test items before or following test administration.
> - Assessment staff may not provide learners with answers to any test item.
> - Assessment staff may not make suggestions as to how to respond to a test item before, during, or after a test administration.
> - Assessment staff should not review with learners test items or test booklets before, during, or after test administration.
> - Copying/printing/photographing **all or any part** of an assessment or taking notes about the items included on an assessment are **strictly prohibited**. As stated in the copyrights, testing materials may not be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical.

- All persons are prohibited from logging into computer-assisted (online or local computer) assessment applications posing as a learner, current or fabricated, to view an assessment. Only an eligible learner is permitted to log in and take a computer-assisted assessment.
- All assessments must be administered in accordance with the instructions outlined in the administration manuals.
- Assessment items may not be used as a sample or practice item to demonstrate how to select responses. Sample items are included in assessments to familiarize learners with the format of the items and the procedures for selecting their answers.
- All persons, except qualified assessors, are prohibited from attempting to formally or informally score assessments.
- All assessors, proctors, or interpreters administering a paper or online assessment to learners approved for accommodations are prohibited from answering test questions in the computer-assisted or print assessment before, during, or after the administration of the test.
- All persons are prohibited from changing learners' answers to test items whether by providing hints or clues during a test administration, correcting wrong answers during or after a test administration, or by erasing and/or correcting answers or responses recorded/selected by the learner.

E. PURCHASING PROCEDURES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT

Local programs should contact the test publisher(s) for specific costs and purchasing requirements. Many test publishers require that only trained staff for the specific assessment may order the materials. In other instances, any staff in a local program may order materials. Select test publishers may require the purchase of a total number or range of administrations annually. As indicated previously, some assessment instruments are printed while others are computer-assisted. Local programs should keep this in mind when planning a purchase.

IV. APPENDIX

POLICIES SUMMARY

1.1 ADHERENCE TO POLICIES (P. 4)

Programs must adhere to the assessment policies identified in this document to ensure fair and equitable access to services, practice informed decision making, and identify program improvement needs.

2.1 LEARNERS TO BE ASSESSED (P. 14)

Programs must assess all learners reported into the NRS Web-based data system. Assessments must meet the following standards.

- A pre-test must be administered within the first 6 hours of instruction to 100 percent of all eligible learners seeking services.
- A post-test must be administered to a minimum of 70 percent of all eligible learners according to the time frame(s) specified in this policy manual.
- All learners continuing to a new fiscal year must have a valid assessment on record on or after July 1 of the previous fiscal year.

2.2 WAIVER USE (P. 15)

In certain, limited cases, programs may waive the test publisher's recommended contact hour requirement for post-testing a learner.

2.3 WAIVER REPORTING (P. 17)

Documentation of the use of a waiver, including the name of the authorizing staff member, the date, and the reason, must be included in the file of each learner receiving a waiver.

2.4 PROGRAM EXIT (P. 17)

Programs must administer a new pre-test for any learner who has spent 90 or more consecutive days without reported program attendance.

2.5 ASSESSMENTS PERMITTED (P.17)

- An assessment must be approved by both USED and OAEL.
- Programs must administer to adult learners only those assessments that are NRS and state approved.
- All approved assessments must be administered in English.

2.6 MINIMUM STAFFING FOR ASSESSMENTS (P.18)

All approved local programs must at all times have at least one active staff member trained and qualified to administer any approved assessment that the program uses.

2.7 TRAINING FOR ADMINISTERING ASSESSMENTS (P.19)

All staff members who administer approved assessments in a program must:
- successfully complete OAEL-approved training on the assessment policy prior and other specific, identified topics prior to administering any approved assessments;
- successfully complete the training on the approved assessment(s) the program uses
- successfully administer and score five assessments under the supervision of a qualified assessor before independently administering an assessment

- successfully complete requalification training to administer assessment(s) every two years

2.8 ASSESSMENT TRAINING REPORTING (P.20)

Approved programs must report and maintain the following information related to assessment training:

- Local programs must report into the NRS Web-based Data System all staff trained on the assessment policy and an approved NRS assessment within 30 days of training completion.
- Local programs must maintain a training log that identifies the five students (minimum) who were initially administered an assessment by the newly trained assessor. The log must identify the test type, date administered, and the student's number as assigned in the NRS data system.

2.9 ACCOMMODATING FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS (P. 21)

Learners with professionally certified documentation, issued within five years prior to program registration, who self-disclose a given physical, mental, or emotional disability must be provided an appropriate accommodation for assessment of EFL

3.1 ASSESSMENT REPORTING (P. 41)

Programs must score and report <u>each</u> NRS assessment (pre- and/or post-test) administered to learners within a reasonable time frame. Assessments must be scored within seven business days of the test administration and reported within 30 business days during the fiscal year. The assessment must be reported in the Web-based data system. Each reported assessment must identify the following.

- Test type
- Test date
- Test subject
- Test form
- Pre/Post-test
- Scale Score
- Test administrator/staff
- Test identification
- Post-test waiver and justification (if applicable)
- Accommodation use and type (if applicable)

3.2 TEST ENVIRONMENT (P. 42)

Programs must provide locations used for assessment that maximize the opportunity for learners to demonstrate educational functioning level.

3.3 TEST SECURITY (P. 43)

Programs must have a written test security policy on file that includes information about proper storage of, the proper handling of, and the regular maintenance of assessment materials.

ACRONYM GUIDE

Adult Basic Education (ABE)
Instructional programs that provide basic skills for adults who are performing below the ninth-grade level in reading, writing, mathematics, and other basic skills; may include pre-GED preparatory components.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE)
Instructional programs that serve adults who do not possess a high school diploma (or equivalent) and who have knowledge and skills consistent with a ninth grade or higher educational level, including the General Educational Development (GED) certificate, high school credit programs for adults, and National External Diploma Programs (NEDP).

Basic English Skills Test (BEST)
The BEST is an NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of ESL adult learners.

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)
CASAS is an NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of adult learners.

Educational Functioning Level (EFL)
Twelve educational functioning levels are identified by the National Reporting System. These learner categories address a general set of standards and competencies that adults must demonstrate to move to the next level. Each level addresses competency areas including basic reading and writing skills, numeracy skills, and functional and workplace skills.

English Literacy/Civics Education (EL/Civics) Grants
Program under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act that funds high-quality, integrated English literacy and civics education services to immigrants and other adults with limited English proficiency so that they are able to better understand United States culture and institutions.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL/ESOL)
Instructional programs that provide basic educational services to adults who are not native speakers of English; primary goal is proficiency in the four English language skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)
GAIN is a NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of adult learners (ABE/ASE) in the subjects of English and math.

General Educational Development (GED) Test
Requires successful completion of a battery of four comprehensive tests in reasoning through language arts, mathematical reasoning, science, and social studies; passing requirements set by the American Council on Education in cooperation with the state.

National Reporting System (NRS)
Accountability system required under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998, which includes student-level demographic, performance, and follow-up data

Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL)
Located within the Virginia Department of Education, OAEL distributes and oversees funding for adult education and literacy activities in Virginia.

Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
The TABE is a widely used, NRS-approved assessment for conducting pre-testing and post-testing of adult learners.

Student Performance Level (SPL)
SPLs are a measure of student English language proficiency based on a standardized assessment. The Mainstream English Language Training (MELT) Project originally developed the SPLs in the 1980s. SPLs assisted in forming the basis of the skills identified in reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the various NRS educational functioning levels for English language learners.

The Virginia Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation, veteran status, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities in its programs and activities.